

NEWS – CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK

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Health Reform Anniversary: THE REPUBLICAN REPEAL AGENDA HURTS SENIORS

WASHINGTON – This week marks the one-year anniversary of the enactment of the health reform law. The Affordable Care Act is already helping America's seniors, and is strengthening the Medicare program for years to come. Seniors are enjoying increased benefits and improved coverage thanks to health reform, including free preventive care and relief in the prescription drug "donut hole" coverage gap that nearly 4 million seniors have already received.

Republicans are now threatening to repeal reform, which would mean an end to improved benefits, improved access to physicians, and relief for seniors with high drug costs. If Republicans win, seniors lose. The Republican repeal agenda would:

- Re-open the donut hole, causing many seniors' drug costs to go up by thousands of dollars and forcing nearly four million seniors to mail back rebate checks that helped them afford prescription drugs;
- Gut programs that fight fraud, waste, and abuse – making it easier for criminals to bilk the Medicare program;
- Eliminate free preventive care for seniors, which is now guaranteed with no cost sharing thanks to health reform;
- Shorten the life of Medicare by 12 years – reinstating overpayments to private insurers and reducing efficiencies in health care delivery;
- Hike premiums for Medicare beneficiaries by \$650 annually in 2019;
- Repeal an early retiree health insurance program that is currently helping retirees maintain

coverage through their former employers;

- Stop creation of a new, reformed marketplace for individuals not yet eligible for Medicare – leaving older individuals who have high health care costs without affordable coverage options;
- Eliminate the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan that is currently covering older individuals with pre-existing conditions who are not yet eligible for Medicare;
- Reinstate arbitrary lifetime limits on coverage that end health care for many seniors with private insurance who have high health care costs.

(Source: House Roll Call vote 14, Senate Roll Call vote 9)

Today, Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA), Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, and Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI), Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee, criticized the Republican agenda for seniors:

Rep. Stark: "Health reform is already helping seniors. As the Administration announced today, nearly 4 million seniors have received rebate checks that helped them through the donut hole. The Republican agenda would hurt seniors – weakening the Medicare system, cutting benefits, and eliminating coverage options for older adults not yet on Medicare."

Rep. Levin: "Health care reform is reducing seniors' out-of-pocket prescription drugs costs and putting Medicare on more solid ground by extending the life of the program by twelve years. Make no mistake: Republican attempts to take away these benefits come at seniors' expense."

For information on how the health reform law is helping seniors, please visit: <http://go.usa.gov/2aG>